



Beatrice State Developmental Center Medical/Professional Services

The Division serves individuals with significant medical, mental, psychological, dental, and rehabilitative needs. Accordingly, the Division has made it a priority to recruit and retain medical, dental, nursing, and allied health professionals who can provide optimal support and care to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Dr. Nabih Ramadan leads these divisional efforts as the Chief Medical Officer, and Dr. Todd Stull leads the operations of the Medical/Professional Unit as its Medical Director

Medical/Professional Services, General Progress

In August 2007, medical services at BSDC were provided to over 300 individuals by four primary care providers, a contracted neurologist for four hours every two weeks, a dentist, and occasional consults by a contracted psychiatrist. To date, the medical unit at BSDC is staffed by four full-time primary care providers, two full-time psychiatrists, three neurologists providing two full-time equivalent support, and one full-time dentist. These professionals provide primary, specialty, advanced specialty (e.g., musculoskeletal neurology), and dental care to 151 individuals with IDD at BSDC, and to others in the community. Members of the Medical/Professional Services unit now provide consultative services on the road, at BSDC, and via tele-health to individuals who have left BSDC to integrate into the community. These services include specialty neurology, psychiatry, musculoskeletal neurology, and physical nutritional management support.

Public Health Clinic

Our medical team provides medical and clinical services at our recently licensed public health clinic (PHC), which is the only State of Nebraska PHC that is devoted exclusively to the care of individuals with IDD. The medical providers at the PHC conduct in-person primary care evaluations such as annual health promotion and prevention, immunization, routine treatments, electrocardiography, and others. Our specialists conduct both in-person and tele-health clinics, which are designed to provide maximal flexibility while mitigating geographical barriers. To date, specialty clinics are: primary neurology, behavioral neurology, musculoskeletal neurology, pain medicine, psychiatry, spine and gait clinic, and physical nutritional management. In addition, our medical team conducts pre-operative physical examinations on individuals who require dental treatment under general anesthesia.

Ambulatory Surgical Center

Dental services at BSDC are provided at our licensed Ambulatory Surgical Center (ASC) which, similar to the PHC, is the only State of Nebraska ASC that is devoted exclusively to providing dental care to individuals with IDD. Our dentist is assisted in the operating room by two contracted certified registered nurse anesthetists. Since its inception, the ASC has been providing dental services to individuals who reside at BSDC and people in the community. Also, our primary care providers are able to conduct preventative tests (e.g., Pap smear) on individuals who are cannot fully cooperate without sedation.

Allied Health Professionals

The medical providers work side-by-side with a full complement of allied health professionals. The allied health professionals are integral to the functions of the musculoskeletal –spine and gait clinic, and the physical nutritional management support group. A comparison of the caseload (individuals to professional ratio) between 2007 and 2011 is worth noting and is depicted in the table below.

Allied Health Professionals	Individuals to professional ratio	
	2007	2011
<i>Physical therapist, physical therapy assistants</i>	112:1	30:1
<i>Therapeutic positioning specialist</i>	None	147:1
<i>Occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants</i>	335:1	38:1
<i>Speech and language pathologists</i>	168:1	76:1
<i>Registered dieticians</i>	84:1	38:1
<i>Audiologist</i>	335:1	147:1
<i>Respiratory therapist</i>	None	147:1

To date, our allied health professionals are:

- Three full-time occupational therapists and one contracted certified occupational therapy assistant
- Two full-time physical therapists, one part-time, nationally-recognized therapeutic positioning specialist, and three physical therapy assistants
- One contracted part-time audiologist
- Four full-time registered dieticians
- One full-time respiratory therapist
- Two full-time speech and language pathologists

Psychology

The Medical/Professional Unit at BSDC seamlessly integrates medical and psychological services. To date, twelve mental health practitioners (13:1 case load), including three behavioral analysts, evaluate and manage psychological needs of individuals with IDD collaboratively with psychiatrists and neurologists. It should be noted that behavioral analysts acquire unique skills that allow them to practice applied behavior, which arguably is critical to the mental health and

welfare of individuals with IDD. Today's psychology department staffing, expertise and capabilities are light years ahead of 2007 when (a) the mental health professional case load was 30:1; (b) neurological and psychiatric services were scarce; and (c) no behavioral analyst was on staff.

Education

The Medical/Professional Unit at BSDC provides direct medical care as well as medical education and training. Educational activities were either non-existent or poorly organized in 2007, and BSDC did not have the dedicated staff to realize such educational and training opportunities. In contrast, with the assistance of two clinical nurse trainers, and a third one who is fully dedicated to the spine and gait and physical nutritional management services, BSDC now provides professional, paraprofessional, and community education on diverse medical, clinical and nursing topics, which arm support staff, the community, and the professionals equally with the knowledge and skills needed to support people with IDD. To date, members of the medical unit have provided training on ethics, epilepsy, gait and posture, pain, neuroleptics, management of constipation, enteral feeding, to mention only a few topics.

Also, it is worth noting that members of the Medical/Professional Unit are scholarly and nationally recognized. Indeed, our respiratory therapist will be lecturing at a national conference on innovative approaches to respiratory care for individuals with IDD. Also, our tele-psychiatry experience was presented at a national conference. Furthermore, the medical unit Chief Medical Officer is developing with national experts guidelines on screening and management of dementia in people with IDD.

Equipped for the Future

The Medical/Professional Unit provides evidence-based and best services to BSDC residents, and is fully poised to increasing its support as a valuable advisory and consultative resource to individuals with IDD elsewhere in Nebraska and beyond. Our professionals have made remarkable achievements, notably reducing unnecessary treatments, increasing individuals' ambulation, reverting people to normal oral feeding after years of tube-feeding, providing timely health preventions and illness interventions, reducing unnecessary emergency department visits, and assisting in comfort and palliative care to the dying.

We built upon past accomplishments and learned from former mistakes. The future of IDD health care in Nebraska is bright, yet young. The dedication of employees, staff, administration, support groups, families and guardians, likely will continue to propel us into excellence and will lead us to fulfilling our vision of a nationally recognized IDD center-for-excellence.